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THE
SIEGE
OF
BELGRADE:

AN
HISTORICAL NOVEL.

TRANSLATED
FROM A GERMAN MANUSCRIPT.

FOUR VOLUMES IN TWO.

VOL. I. 2. 3. 4.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD RAWDON.

MY LORD,

THOSE gallant, generous, and
judicious qualities which attract,
in your Lordship, the admiration,
I may say the love, of every
a 2 virtuous

virtuous individual, are so frequently, and in so many instances, expressed in the following sheets, that one would almost suspect the author of being intimately acquainted with your Lordship's virtues; and, of adopting You as his accomplished Archetype.

To strengthen the apparent similitude, it is not a little remarkable, that the hero particularly alluded to, is brought from that country which boasts the honour
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of your Lordship's birth; and, also, that he is united in bands of sacred friendship, to a MAGNANIMOUS YOUTH, allied in blood and affinity to the august and illustrious Houses of BRUNSWICK and MECKLENBURG.

For these reasons, my Lord, and to mark, if possible, more strongly, by my grateful attestation, the Public opinion of your Lordship's character, I have presumed to ornament my labour,

with

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with your distinguished name;
and am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble,

And obedient Servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

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S I E G E

OF

B E L G R A D E.

IN the year 1789, when the ambition of a female tyrant, and the vanity of a capricious despot, united not only to exterminate the unoffending descendants of Mahomet, but to disturb the peace of Europe, splendid encouragements were held out to the brave and active of surrounding nations. The numerous tribes of Russia, and those under the imperative command of the Emperor Joseph, being

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being collected from the remotest corners of their respective and immense dominions, were yet not judged sufficient for the purposes of supporting a modern crusade; and courage and military skill were invited from every quarter.

Among the heroic bands of illustrious foreigners who offered their voluntary services upon this important occasion, was a Polish nobleman, descended from one of the most ancient families of that kingdom. Having raised in his own country and by the influence of his private fortune and connections, a small body of cavalry, Count Albert Zamoiski, for such were the name and title by which he travelled, appeared in the capital of Saint Petersburg, and was there received by the Empress, with every mark of favour and distinction, which his rank and gallantry demanded.

When it is observed that Count Albert Zamoiski was not less liberally endowed with

with personal accomplishments, than with a brave and elevated spirit, those who know the amorous complexion of Catherine, will not be surprised when they learn that he soon became a favorite object of her attention and sollicitude, nor that honours were suddenly and profusely bestowed upon him. Albert was, however, as yet unconscious of the cause, and imputed to gratitude alone that peculiar good fortune which in fact proceeded from a softer and more interesting sensation.

The frosts of three-score polar winters had not yet affected the blood of Catherine so much, as to congeal the warmth of her meridian disposition; neither had the effects of time, in her own imagination, rendered her features disagreeable or indifferent to others. From the first moment she beheld Count Albert, she resolved to engage him in other wars than those he had contemplated for her service, and spared no ornament of personal magni-

cence, which might possibly inspire him with similar emotions.

The city, at this time, much crouded by the nobility of the Empire, displayed a variety of unusual and elegant spectacles; and the court galas, in which the Empress always took peculiar delight, were now more frequent and more sumptuous than ever. Albert, whose youth had been in a great degree devoted to the science of war, and in whose breast the flame of ambition burned with an enthusiastic ardor, appeared, upon those public and private occasions, more from respect to his new mistress, than from the indulgence of any real happiness, and was often constrained into a semblance of enjoyment, when in fact he felt no sensation of pleasure.

To a woman less experienced in the volume of mankind, the situation of Albert's mind might have escaped discovery; but

but Catherine saw, with a veteran eye, what passed within, and used every expedient, which accustomed judgment could dictate, in hopes of effecting a revolution. Sometimes she rallied him upon his absence, and sometimes upon the apparent indifference with which he viewed the variety of female attractions which surrounded him.

To such observations, Albert generally replied with a degree of manly modesty and good sense, which, if not satisfactory, were yet pleasing; and if not encouraging to hope, could not fail of encreasing desire: but it was yet too soon to intimate any thing that might lead to a disclosure of Catherine's designs—she now almost despaired of attaining them by the usual forms of female advancement, and resolved to make, what she found to be, the first bias of Albert's soul the medium of her own secret wishes.

Public exhibitions and court galas were now virtually interdicted, and nothing but the splendour and the pomp of war was to be seen in every quarter. The Empress, and all the ladies belonging to her household, together with all others of distinction, appeared every morning in uniform, and the days were spent in reviewing and exercising the troops. Albert, if attractive upon general occasions, must now be supposed to captivate. He had studied in the school of the great Frederic, and was the favoured pupil of that unrivalled master.

Albert was constantly honoured with the command, and performed all the various evolutions of military duty with such correctness, and at the same time so much energy and animation, that the soldiers seemed to catch ardour as if by sympathy; and in their looks and manner to anticipate victory.

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The oldest officers, either native or foreign, acknowledged his extraordinary abilities, and every day produced some valuable attestation of Imperial favour.

But, although the praise of his extraordinary skill was loud and universal, and though it could not be withheld without manifest injustice, it did not however fail to excite emotions of envy in the breasts of those, who from a mean and despicable nature, could not endure the exaltation of superior merit. Unsuspicious, and of course regardless, of every consequence but future glory, Albert pursued the daily task of exercising the troops, until he had established among them a system of discipline to which they had before been strangers.

The season was now approaching when the army was to march. Every day brought advices from the Turkish frontiers of the prodigious defensive armament which the Vizier was preparing,
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and every such account served but as an additional stimulus to Albert's impatience. Catherine observed the effect with disappointment and concern, and at length determined upon risking a communication of her partiality. This was, however, to be done in a manner so cautious and equivocal, that should the object of her affections either reject with disdain, or accept with coolness, her passion, she might avoid the confusion of discovery.

Among the females of fashion who were honoured with the confidence of the Empress, was Madam de St. Foix, a Frenchwoman, and wife to a Colonel in the Russian service, who, possessing all the qualities of amorous intrigue, had been often employed upon such occasions. To this lady, Catherine made no difficulty of communicating what, in fact, had long before been observed by the confidant, namely, her extraordinary partiality for Count Albert. Madam de Saint Foix had an elegant suite of apartments in the palace of Petersburg, and it was agreed that her

her husband, under the appearance of personal esteem, should invite the Count to a splendid supper in the royal residence.

Madam de Saint Foix undertook the difficult part of founding the Count's heart, and, if possible, of reconciling to his youth and sensibility the effects which the hand of Time had wrought upon the once beautiful Catherine. The evening was appointed, and the Colonel having received instructions accordingly, lost no time in the performance of his duty. He was for a few days sedulously attentive to Albert, and when he had fully prepared him for the acceptance of his invitation, proposed it with all the semblance of unaffected friendship: "You must guard your heart," observed the Colonel, who was much more practised in the science of Cupid than of Mars; "for Madam de Saint Foix intends to assault it by surprise, and for that purpose has enlisted all the beauty of Petersburg. From the entire devotion

votion which you pay to the profession of arms, she suspects you of an unusual indifference to other attractions, and means, to-morrow evening, to make a trial of your sensibility!"

This intimation, which was conceived to be no more than a flash of general gaiety, for which Colonel de St. Foix was much distinguished, had no other effect, but that of preparing Albert for what was really intended, a scene of unusual magnificence and festivity.

To do all possible honour to this distinguished appointment, the next evening, Albert adorned himself with the richest habiliments of his profession, and in the complete uniform of a Polish hussar, attended his engagement. The natural elegance of his figure, and the unaffected dignity of his countenance, made a universal impression in his favour; and Madam de Saint Foix, agreeably to the licensed vivacity of her country, paid him certain compliments,

compliments, which not a little surprised the more phlegmatic and suspicious part of the assembly. Colonel de St. Foix, however, listened not only with complacency, but pleasure, and liberally assisted in the commendations of his illustrious guest.

The company consisted of all the foreign ministers, their ladies and families, and the principal part of the nobility residing in the capital, and the conversation such as might naturally be expected among persons of rank and eminence. After the usual refreshments of the evening had been served, Madam de Saint Foix invited the company to the Imperial ball-room, where the royal band of music was in waiting for their accommodation.

The avenues to this magnificent apartment were all brilliantly illuminated, and the room itself so profusely splendid, as to outvie the natural appearance of day!

Colonel

Colonel de Saint Foix acted as an assistant master of the ceremonies; and presented Albert with the hand of a fair partner, who had until that moment escaped his observation, but who was then observed too soon for his future peace.

The name of this beautiful virgin was Veda; she was an orphan under the protection of Catherine, and by her mother's side lineally descended from the illustrious house of Zuski, which formerly held the ducal scepter of the Russian empire; but which, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, lost its supreme power by the intrigues and superior good fortune of Sigismund the Third, son to John King of Sweden.

Through the intrigues of the Orloff faction, which after the deposition of the late Emperor Peter, was both powerful and extensive, for some presumed state offence, the father of Veda was banished to Kiow, on the banks of the

the river Nieper, where in a short time he disappeared on a sudden, and was supposed to have been lost in some of the great forests of that remote province.

Her mother did not long survive the absence of her Lord, but died of a broken heart before the news of his disaster arrived at Petersburg; and the Empress, to make some atonement to the only surviving child of those unhappy parents, took the care, not only of her person, but of her hereditary fortune, and announced her as a match for some one of her most distinguished subjects.

Fate, however, which counteracts even the purposes of sovereigns, had decided otherwise, and the lovely Veda was destined for the participation of more refined and social joys than the coarse manners, and savage ideas, of her own country afforded.

Albert, whose heart had, heretofore, ever been a stranger to any fixed attachment, no sooner saw her than he felt the full power of beauty, and acknowledged to himself the inferiority of every impulse, when compared to that of love.

For the first moment since his arrival at Peterburgh, he now entirely lost sight of the Turkish crescent; and now beheld more irresistible attractions in the softened brightness of her eyes, than in all the splendours of battle and proud conquest.

The incomparable Veda was about eighteen years of age, and rather above the middle stature. Her eyes, as already mentioned, displayed a humid brilliancy. Her teeth, a pearly whiteness—her lips the colour and gentleness of rose-buds, and her cheeks, such tints as are seen in those of Reuben's angels; no wonder, then, that charms resulting from the whole should captivate a youth whose soul, though eager in the pursuit of martial glory, was yet by nature

ture exquisitely susceptible of female loveliness.

Madam de St. Foix, who from the indifference with which Albert had heretofore regarded the Russian ladies, suspected, either that he was separated from the object of his affections, or that his love of arms had absorbed all other passions, narrowly watched his looks, and saw, with secret satisfaction, the effects which beauty produced upon his heart.

The dance continued until a late hour, when the company began to disperse without ceremony. At the idea of departure, Albert began to feel certain emotions, before unknown; but his solicitude was shortly relieved by Colonel de Saint Foix, who, with his accustomed ease and good humour, invited him to sup with a select party; and, as if he considered the circumstance, as it really was, an imperative inducement, requested he would lead his fair partner to the room

prepared for that purpose. De Saint Foix led the way; and Albert, happy in the opportunity of retaining the soft hand of his charming Veda, followed with a sort of instinctive obedience.

Madam de Saint Foix, who was already in the apartment, received her selected guests with affability, and congratulated them upon an expected honour, which she observed would amply atone for any thing defective in the conduct of the gala—the Empress, she said, had graciously condescended to intimate her intentions of uniting with the supper party.

Albert, whose thoughts were entirely engrossed by other objects, heard the news without any apparent emotion, and a short interval announced the arrival of Catherine, to whom the Colonel and his lady paid almost divine honours.

Whether the Empress had been a private spectatress of Albert's attentions during

during the night, or whether Madam de Saint Foix had communicated what she herself observed, is not known; but Catherine appeared to be in full possession of the only medium by which she could possibly become interesting to Albert.

After receiving the obedience of the whole party, she seated herself in an elevated chair placed for her accommodation, and with a countenance expressive of infinite complaisance, desired Veda to approach her; and, as a distinguished mark of her affection, ordered her to sit on her right hand.

Albert, who at this time was a total stranger to Veda's rank, and the circumstances of her history, now began to draw inferences of her family consequence, as flattering to his pride as her beauty was captivating to his love. As the unconscious needle follows the attractive magnet, so did Albert involuntarily follow this loadstone of his heart; and, without wait-

ing for the ceremony of approbation, seated himself beside her.

It is a maxim in philosophy, that reason is in itself capable of correcting all irregular affections; yet, if the wisest stoic was but to watch the tenor of his own conduct, and to reflect upon what passes within himself, he would confess that the first efforts of instant passions, is to put out the light of that distinguishing quality. That Albert, on the present occasion, lost sight of those maxims, by which wisdom is said to be supported, must be immediately admitted; his attachment already too strongly suspected, was now fully confirmed in the mind of the Empress, who thereupon began to feel the envenomed sting of jealousy.

Dissembling, however, the reality of her thoughts, and divesting herself of Imperial formality, she assumed an air of sprightliness; and rallied Albert upon his newly acquired vivacity, which, she observed, was highly improving. Colonel
de

de Saint Foix joined in the royal observation; and, to promote the pleasing effects of their fulness, poured libations to the joys of love and harmony.

The Empress and Madam de Saint Foix, according to the custom of Russian ladies, were not over scrupulous; and Albert, sufficiently intoxicated by the effects of love, increased his passion by the aid of Bacchus. Thus the moments flew, when Veda, whose gentle nature felt awkward at the scene, called for her domestics, and with the leave of Catherine retired.

The exit of Veda cast an obvious cloud over the countenance of Albert; but the Colonel, and Madam de Saint Foix, whose interest it was to prevent, what would certainly have provoked resentment in the breast of their royal guest, with astonishing adroitness and address, dispelled the gloom. For a time the presence of Veda was continued in the recital of her praise, and when the chagrin produced
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by her departure was gradually softened, the conversation turned upon that topic which they well knew was next in Albert's estimation.

The Empress, whose opinion of herself was not a little humbled by Albert's partiality for Veda, still observed in him a disposition of which she, as well as Madame de Saint Foix, had entertained some doubts; she also had remarked in him so total an indifference to the sex, that she almost despaired of drawing his attention from the love of arms: she now, however, had the satisfaction of finding him susceptible of more tender impressions; and, though she had little to expect from the force of her personal charms, she did not despair of success by the influence of her power.

De Saint Foix, who was well instructed in the business, began a splendid eulogium on the success of the Imperial powers over the Turks, and displayed the excitements of ambition, and the pomp and pageantry of

of war in terms of the most heroic oratory. The immolations of Infidel happiness, he painted, as acceptable to a Christian deity, and the effusion of human blood as pleasing to a God of Mercy. In short, de Saint Foix spoke of war, not as an unavoidable evil arising from human depravity, but a science by which the most amiable of mankind were to become eminent.

From this enthusiastic definition of war, the Colonel ingeniously adverted to the wisdom and public virtue of the Empress, and the admiration and respect, which she justly held in the political and moral contemplation of all Europe for the energy, and wisdom of her councils, and the irresistible success of her armies.

Albert listened with attention, and never having thought seriously upon the calamities of war, agreed implicitly with the sentiments of de St. Foix. The Empress heard the discourse with pleasure, and being accustomed to praise, received it as a
just

just tribute to her sovereignty. She had, as before mentioned, been profuse in her testimonies of favour to Count Albert, but command, the only road to military fame, she reserved until the present moment.

The declining state of the Emperor's health, she observed, was likely to occasion an extraordinary revolution in the politics of Europe, and particularly as his dissolution would affect the war with Turkey. The known pusillanimity of Leopold, his apparent successor, she had just reason to apprehend would leave the issue of that important object entirely to her sole arbitrement, and in that case she should be compelled to levy new forces, and to replace the German allies with her own armies, "But," added she, "should that not be the case, the skill and ardent spirit which I have observed in the gallant Albert, have determined me to give full scope to his abilities and courage. The military genius and spirit of Prince Potemkin", continued she, "is well known, and universally approved of.

of. He is already appointed General of the Bulgarian forces; and to you," said she, looking graciously on Count Albert, "shall devolve the command of those destined to act in the Province of Servia. My confidence in your valour and good conduct is unqualified, and my opinion of your gratitude not less favourable.

Albert, in the first moments of sensibility, scarcely knew how to express his acknowledgments. All thoughts of the incomparable Veda were banished, and the plumage of his ambition overshadowed for a while all the excitements of his love. He threw himself at the feet of his benefactress, and in terms of animated zeal, pledged his honour, and future fame as sureties for her royal favour.—Catherine presented her hand; and Albert, pressing it to his lips, as the seal of his covenant, arose and submissively resumed his seat.

To interpret events agreeably to our wishes, is among the universal weaknesses
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of our nature. The manner in which Albert accepted the royal appointment was marked with the energy of an elevated spirit, indulged in its most favourite propensity; but the Empress, well as she was versed in the disposition of mankind, mistook, in some degree, the motive of his transport, and thought the united effects of joy and gratitude were, at least, mixed with a portion of tenderness.—Madam de Saint Foix, whose knowledge of the sex was but little inferior, was little less deceived, and both appeared charmed with the success of their evening's expedient.

The Empress and Madam de Saint Foix, having, in their own judgments, made sufficient advances for a first interview, now retired; and left the Count and the Colonel to act agreeably to their own inclinations. No sooner were they alone, than the latter began to expatiate upon the uncommon good fortune of Albert, and the express interest which the Empress had adopted in his favour. “You are,” said the Colonel, “a
further

further proof of a truth which I have all my life observed, that the personal gifts of nature, are more recommendatory to the female sex, than those bestowed upon the mind, however liberal and extraordinary : here are," continued he, " in the city of Petersburgh, several experienced and brave veterans, who have been long soliciting, and would be proud to accept situations, in the army, very subordinate to that which you have been fortunate enough to attain without trouble.

Albert, though vanity was remote from his soul, was yet not insensible of his corporal endowments ; but, he could not possibly conceive how other qualities than courage, and military judgment, could become inducements to military trust and confidence, and did not hesitate to declare his sentiments with freedom.

" You are, I find," said de Saint Foix, " as yet a stranger to the full extent of your happiness ; can you perceive, in all the

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munificent distinctions conferred upon you since your arrival in Petersburg, nothing more than mental attachment? or, are you still so far unacquainted with the Empress, as not to know that, though sovereign of this vast empire, and absolute mistress of twenty million of slaves, she is, herself, the slave of impulse. You have, my fortunate friend, made a deep impression upon the heart of Catherine; and it is to that you must at present impute the enviable and exalted figure you are destined to make in future."

The revolution which these words effected in the soul of Albert, for a while, deprived him of all utterance. He felt an instinctive repugnance at the motives of his promotion; the thoughts of Veda rushed upon his mind; and all the golden prospects which, but a moment before, had charmed his youthful and generous nature, became dark and ignominious! De Saint Foix observed the conflict,

fiect; and having really conceived for him a kind of worldly and political esteem, dreaded the probable consequences. Born in a nation where convenience is the chief morality; and educated in a school, where politeness and acquiescence are the favourite classics; de Saint Foix mistook dissimulation for sentiment, and, in reality, pitied those, as unsocial and weak-minded, who could not bend their nature to accommodation, especially in affairs of gallantry. He was, however, a man incapable of intended mischief; and one whose person and purse were often devoted to the service of those for whom he conceived a friendship.

“ You seem disturbed, Count Albert?” said the Colonel; “ does prosperity offend you? or do the effects of a too sudden and fruitless passion prevent you from thinking wisely of permanent advantage? You are, I find, a novice in the school of gallantry; but, come, for the present, let us think of some other subject; sleep upon the information

I have given you, and when we next meet, tell me your dreams, and I will interpret their meaning."

Though Albert's thoughts were rather too serious to be treated with much levity, there was something so good humoured, and pleasing in the manner of this conversation, that he could not possibly take offence. He could not, however, help observing, that no favours, no advancements, that were not natural to honour, could be accepted without disgrace and disquietude ; and that, under such circumstances as now mentioned, he was afraid the Empress must revoke her favours. He had left his native country to serve her in the field only.

De Saint Foix laughed at what he called formality of humour ; and advised him, as he preferred prosperity and peace, to think less gravely—*In vino veritas!* the Colonel drank freely, and freely confessed, that there was nothing which he, or Madam de

de Saint Foix, lamented more than a deficiency of those allurements by which the Count had so fortunately made war upon the heart of Catherine.

As for Veda, he observed, she was already disposed of. Her beauty had made many conquests, but none to her own approbation: the Empress had, however, promised her to Prince Czerfaskoi, a man old enough to be her father; but a former court favourite, and of great possessions and power in the Province of Wiatha. "Where," said he, "she is doomed to be ice-bound for the remainder of her days. Of all her numerous suitors, Prince Czerfaskoi is said to be the one she most dislikes: but no matter, women's inclinations, in this country, are never studied, and her fate is absolutely settled."

If the generous Albert was much affected by the communication of Catherine's sentiments, sentiments so inimical to his fame, how must his heart have felt upon the

preceding recital—a recital so adverse to his love! He had seen the beautiful Veda, and to see her was to be enamoured; she was born to subdue, and Albert, the implicit slave of her charms, felt a pleasure in his captivity. He was, however, cautious enough to conceal the turbulence of his emotions; and though the gaiety of de St. Foix's humour so illy accorded with the agitation of his spirits, he disguised his feelings, and appeared, in some degree, sprightly and unembarrassed. De St. Foix, who had drank freely, and who had detained his guest much longer than was perfectly agreeable, now suffered him to depart; but not until he had, by frequent repetitions of kind offers secured his confidence and esteem.

Instead of retiring to rest, for which he felt no sort of disposition, Albert, upon his return home, began to reflect with deliberation upon what had passed the preceding night. The beauteous vision of Veda was yet before him. He now beheld her as
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the devoted victim of despotic power!—the destined sacrifice of a coarse and sensual appetite; and indulging himself in all the romantic thoughts of youthful heroism, formed an inflexible resolution of freeing her from the tyranny of compulsion. No distance, however remote—no dures, however strict and guarded—could restrain or defeat his ardour—no place, however sacred, could shield from his indignation, those who might have the rashness to oppose his love. And thus, in the contemplation of great actions and great rewards, Albert spent the moments, until an attendant reminded him of a grand review, which, by order of the Empress and the Grand Duke, was to take place that morning. Rousing himself, therefore, from the soft solitudes of love, he prepared for the business of the field, and in a short time took the station allotted him for that day.

To those acquainted with his accustomed ardour, and appearance, there was visible,
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notwithstanding all his efforts, an unusual languor in his manner; and his countenance, however interesting, did not display that glow of health which heretofore gave it harmony and expression.

In marching by the Imperial quarter, to make the customary salute, he was not a little surprised upon missing the Czarina; after whom, as soon as his duty admitted, he made respectful enquiries. She had sent word that indisposition prevented her attendance, but ordered that her absence might not delay the progress of the review. Before Albert was acquainted with the secret movements of her heart, he had always taken a youthful pride in hearing her encomiums of his military skill, and would upon any previous occasion have felt both disappointment and concern; but as, under the circumstances of de Saint Foix's conversation, an interview, at least upon his part, could not fail of being awkward, and perplexing—the accident produced a different effect: his spirits resumed
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their usual vigour, and the wonted glow of health again adorned his visage.

While the troops were going through their various exercises, and while Albert's attention was entirely applied to the regularity of their evolutions, Madame de Saint Foix, together with Veda, and some few other females of distinction, arrived in the field. Veda was mounted upon a fine Hungarian palfry, white as was her own innocence, and richly caparisoned.

Having been but a few days returned from a visit at Moscow, the novelty, as well as beauty and magnificence of her appearance, attracted the observation of all ranks, and her praise became the universal topic. She had scarcely taken her station, when Albert, at the head of his own corps, in leading them to charge a body of infantry, passed the place on full speed: notwithstanding the velocity of his motion—such is the instinctive quality of love—he unfortunately had a glimpse of her person, and
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endeavouring by a too sudden and incautious exertion, to check his horse's speed, and turn him on one side; the animal, who was of a fiery and rather restive nature, began to plunge with prodigious violence, inasmuch as to resist all the skill and strength of his rider. Every breast was alarmed; and Colonel de Saint Foix, with a degree of gallantry that proved the reality of his friendship, and at the imminent hazard of his personal safety, ran to afford assistance, but in vain, by seizing the reins, he only rendered the beast more furious and ungovernable, until at last, he reared so high as to lose his balance, and fall backward with great violence. Albert, however, by a skilful and an active effort, avoided the dangerous consequences; and, to the joy and surprise of every beholder, stood unhurt, at some distance from the fallen animal.

During the interval of this perilous event, as it has already been remarked, the spectators were under the utmost anxiety; but,

but, Veda, with a degree of resistless emotion, similar to that which produced the accident, gave a loud shriek, and fainted in the arms of Prince Czerskaskoi, who was placed on horseback beside her. Every eye was now fixed upon the incautious Veda, who being lifted from her saddle, was ordered by the Prince to be put into a carriage, and taken to her apartments in the palace.

Albert, now entirely released from danger, and freed from embarrassment, saw the confusion; and not exactly knowing what produced it, pressed through the crowd, in order to satisfy his curiosity and solicitude; and seeing Veda pale, and, to all appearance, breathless, discovered such emotions as made his passion in a moment public.— Prince Czariskaskoi was at that time giving orders for her conveyance to the palace; and although those orders might have appeared necessary, Albert heard them as proofs, of an authority, which he conceived to be usurped; and, therefore, with an impe-

imperative, though at the same time tender tone, declared that her situation demanded more immediate assistance and without waiting for either assent or disapprobation, took her in his arms, and placed her in the nearest carriage. One of the army surgeons felt her pulse, which he declared to be weak, and irregular; however, in a short time, by the application of water, and pungent remedies, she began to shew signs of returning animation.

Madam de Saint Foix, who was in the carriage, also, saw the dangerous consequences of this proceeding: she saw Prince Czerskaskoi, burning with resentment and jealousy; she observed, by the countenances of every one present, that a right construction had universally taken place; and having an esteem for Albert, equal to that of her husband, felt sensibly for the issue.—Albert, still occupied the door of the carriage on one side, and Madam de Saint Foix stooping as if
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for some other purpose, whispered him her apprehensions, and adjured him, as he regarded not only his own safety, but the happiness of her he loved, to retire, and by assuming an air of as much indifference as should appear natural, to avert the storm.

Had Madam de Saint Foix mentioned only the personal safety of Albert, her advice, instead of suppressing the expression of his love, would have made it more and more demonstrative, but the happiness of Veda was of too much importance to admit of self-indulgence. He had the secret satisfaction of knowing the cause of her indisposition, and he saw, with delight, that she was recovering—He, was the first object of her opening eyes; and he thought, perhaps with truth, that they regarded him with tenderness. After a few moments hesitation, therefore, he retired; and, mixing with the crowd, received many complimentary congratulations on account of his escape. The great Duke and Duchess, and every one present, except Prince Czerfka-

skoi, spoke with kindness on the occasion; but the prince remounted his charger, and, followed by his numerous train of domestics, rode off the field with apparent marks of indignation and disgust.

Prince Czerskaskoi, was a nobleman of the north-east province of Wiatka, and in every respect a native Muscovite: ferocious in his looks, and austere and unsocial in his manners—proud of his descent, and fortune, and vain of his feudal power. He was one of those petty despots who held the subordinate classes of mankind in contempt; or, if in any degree of consequence, only as he found them necessary or material to his own convenience. From the disconsolate wives and children of his gloomy province, he had brought no less than five thousand soldiers, or rather slaves, and if occasion required, could command twice that number, to swell the Imperial army.

At an early period of life he became enamoured with the daughter of a neighbouring prince,

prince, an heiress, of immense fortune and consummate beauty ; but in a few years, by inventing a story to her dishonour, he obtained a divorce from her bed, and suffered her to die of affliction ; and although the fallacy of his accusation was manifest, from the last declaration of two vassals—whom he had suborned upon the occasion, and whom he afterwards put to death, under colour of some trifling offence, but in reality because they demanded the wages of their iniquity, and were living reproaches to his conscience—he had still influence enough to avoid the inquiry of justice.—To those detestable qualities, may be annexed the natural defect of unequal age ; which alone, to a female of sensibility, must ever be a bar against connubial happiness ; he was above fifty years old, but healthy and athletic.

From this character and description, it may easily be imagined, how the gentle nature of Veda must shudder at the thoughts of an indissoluble union ! She had been but a short time acquainted with the Em-

prefs's intentions, and had not yet determined in her own mind how to act, in order to avoid an event which she could not contemplate but with disgust and horror.

Czerfaskoi had as yet never deigned to solicit Veda's approbation; but, agreeably to the savage and unpolished genius of his country, conceived that, in common with the rest of her sex, she was of course the slavish property of accidental power; and, having obtained the consent of her royal guardian, scorned to consult her own inclinations, or the probable affections of her youthful heart. The recent circumstances of apprehension on the one hand, and tenderness on the other, had, however, given him the most mortifying suspicions, and roused, in his perfidious nature, all the odious principles of envy, jealousy, and revenge. From those circumstances, he had every reason to infer, that she not only loved, but was beloved also; and that the youthful Polander, was the happy rival of his unquestionable pretensions.

The

The sudden indisposition of the Czarina, which was now made public, cast a universal gloom over the whole city. All that historical truth, or legendary fiction ever reported, respecting the most distinguished females of antiquity, was applied in her praise; and, indeed, if the encouragement of fine arts; the patronage of literature and talents—if, the desire of making her subjects great, and her country eminent for civilization and refinement, can give a title to fame, her claims were indisputable.—She had not only enlarged her already vast empire, by the irresistible valour of her armies, but its trade, manufactures and commerce, by the superior wisdom of her expedients. She had given sovereigns to foreign states, and dictated, through the medium of her councils, to most of the cabinets of northern Europe. She had subjugated the valuable and beautiful peninsula of Crim-Tartary, and Circassia; and, by the terror of her arms, had compelled the Princes of Georgia to become her feudatories and vassals. Nothing in the North

and East of Europe could resist her power; and, to complete the magnificence of her public character, she had already spread more terror among the Mahometans, than all the united efforts of the ancient Crusades.

Among a people, who had been long accustomed to rudeness and obscurity, to contempt and detestation—it is not then to be wondered at, that Catherine should be truly loved, and highly revered. In short, the splendour of her public actions, has rendered her, in the ideas of her people, little less than what her memory will ever be—immortal.

The review being over, the nobility and gentry resorted, in great numbers, to the palace; the outside of which was, also, much crowded by inquirers: so great, indeed, was the public curiosity, that a formal report, from the attending faculty, was found necessary to abate its impatience; the physicians declared, “ That her Majesty’s situation

situation was not dangerous ; that it chiefly affected her spirits ; that she was then much better than in the morning, and that a few days would, probably, restore her to perfect health."

This was altogether as true as it was satisfactory ; but the people, who were happy by the report of her amendment, were totally ignorant of the cause of her complaint. The wife, the great, the magnificent arbitress and conqueror of nations ! had, in company with her female confidant, spent the whole of the preceding night in listening to the conversation of Count Albert and de Saint Foix ; and was affected only by spleen and disappointment.

Albert, who was of course among the higher circles, sought in vain for the lovely object of his wishes. He ranged from one apartment to another, and made several enquiries of those with whom he was most intimate ; the only satisfaction
however,

however, he could obtain was, that she was nearly recovered from the apprehensions occasioned by his accident ; and, Madam de Saint Foix, at length, added, that her absence was more the effect of delicacy and prudence, than occasioned by any remains of indisposition.

These words could not be misunderstood : they were delivered with an archness which fully explained their relative meaning ; yet Albert, uncertain of their literal truth, and burning with desire to know the particulars of Veda's situation, appeared far from being pleased or satisfied. The royal confidant saw his solicitude, and would have gratified his curiosity ; but prudence, on her part also, prevented her from continuing the conversation. She evinced evident signs of embarrassment, and left Albert under the most painful impressions of doubt and uncertainty.

The Count was that day invited to dine with the Minister of his own nation, at whose

whose house, among a variety of other persons of distinction, was a native of Ireland, just arrived from Paris, who assumed the title of Viscount Leinster. He was regularly descended from the ancient Kings of that province; and had, like many others, lost his hereditary fortune by the loyalty and adherence of his grandfather, to the unfortunate, ungrateful, and pusillanimous, James the Second. Like Count Albert, he had been bred up to arms, and had served gallantly in the unsuccessful expedition of his countryman O'Reily, against the piratical state of Algiers. To this young soldier of fortune, nature had not been less bountiful than she had been to the Count. He was above the common stature; his features were regular and animated; and, his address and manners, such as bespoke nobility and breeding. His certificates of service were lavish in praise of his valour; and his letters of recommendation such, as bore indisputable testimony of his worth.

As

As Albert happened to sit next this amiable stranger, he had an opportunity of conversing with him, and found him possessed of very uncommon talents, especially in tactics, of which he spoke with a degree of modest decision, which charmed the whole company.

At a late hour, and after the dinner had been delayed a considerable time; the bustle of state parade announced the approach of some important character; and in a few moments Prince Czerkaskoi, in all the rude pomposity of his manners, entered the apartment. The Minister received him with politeness, and introduced to his knowledge those of the party who had not before that honour. He received the compliments of each with an awkward pride, which affected complacency could not possibly disguise; and seemed to receive, as the claims of homage, what should have been accepted as the voluntary concessions of good manners.

In

In presenting Count Albert, some flattering expressions were made use of; but Czerkaskoi, instead of attending to them with grace, fixed his eyes upon a different object, and appeared to glow with uncontrolable resentment. Count Albert saw the conflict which disturbed him; and, knowing the cause, felt rather pleased than concerned at the consequence.

At dinner the conversation turned principally upon the French revolution; and the Viscount Leinster, who had been a witness to all the sanguinary proceedings, in the beginning of that extraordinary event, related some circumstances, which had never publicly transpired. The assassination of both King and Queen, and a change of the succession, he mentioned as objects actually intended by the Duke of ———, of whom he spoke in language of great severity. But, although he censured the violences committed upon this great occasion, he very forcibly described the abstract virtue and necessity of reformation,

reformation : alledging, that the spirit of the constitution, and the indispenfible rights of men, had been totally abforbed in a blind and flavifh obedience to defpotifm. The unparalleled injufice of letters de cachet, the incredible horrors of the Baftile, and other ftate prifons; the oppreffions of Miniftry; the venality of judges; the wretchednefs of the peasantry; the wanton cruelty and barbarifm of vaffalage and feudatory power; the wafte of public wealth; and the abufe of prerogative; he, not only, defcribed, but illuftrated, in colours, ftrong, glowing, and natural.

! The company, in general, appeared to approve his fentiments, and to be highly pleafed with his manner of but the Prince Czerskaskoi—unable to endure doctrines fo adverfe to his own tyrannical ideas of government; loft his temper, and made many obfervations, which at once fhewed the meannefs, as well as defpotifm, of his difpofition. Even
under

under the glorious auspices, he said, of the great Catherine, there were discontented spirits, who only wanted the encouragement of systematic licentiousness to disturb her peace; and, by fermenting internal disloyalty, sully the glory of her reign. This which was pronounced with so much pointed emphasis, as to confuse not only the Viscount, but every one present, was succeeded by a pause of considerable length, and much embarrassment.

There are certain characters, who though little entitled to intrinsic estimation, are yet sometimes valuable in society; of which class was Colonel de Saint Foix. All the united philosophy and discretion of the company was unable to escape the dilemma of this injudicious and ill-natured observation, until the vivacity of that agreeable Frenchman happily interfered, and, in some degree, removed the inconvenience. His remark was, that the Empress had an indemnity for happiness as

well in the native *politeness* and *gallantry* of her subjects, as in her more shining qualities. The irony and application of the compliment produced a general smile; and the Prince, who perhaps held de Saint Foix too lightly for his serious attention, appeared not displeased with his raillery.

Nothing, however, could entirely remove the uneasiness of the Viscount, who, being conscious of no intentional offence, felt his consequence, if not his spirit, affected; and who continued the remainder of the evening under evident impressions of solicitude. Albert, also, who had conceived for him a partiality very nearly approaching to sincere friendship, and whose dislike to Prince Czerkaskoi's character, was considerably heightened by the recollection of his presumptuous designs upon Veda, could scarce do justice to the elegant hospitality of the feast; he was, however, too refined to say any thing that might disturb the general harmony, and

and the time passed without any direct symptoms of disgust.

Albert, as already observed, having been much pleased with the engaging manners of the Hibernian soldier, took an opportunity, before the party separated, to invite him to his house; which, he observed would be more convenient and comfortable than a public lodging. He was single he said, and would prize his company as the highest favour. The Viscount accepted his invitation with infinite satisfaction, and seemed to possess a reciprocity of esteem. He had not as yet been presented at Court, nor delivered any of his letters of recommendation, and was therefore at liberty to accept of any prior attention that might offer. Accordingly, the next day, he ordered his luggage from the hotel in which he had taken his temporary residence, and in the evening took possession of his new accommodations.

If, upon the first interview, the friendship of Leinster appeared to be an accession of consequence, a more intimate knowledge of his history, and his heart, highly increased its value. He possessed all the natural virtues of his country, with scarcely an alloy of those qualities which sometimes sully its general character. He was gentle, yet brave; patient, yet alive to glory; tender in his affections, yet resolute in his just resentments; firm in attachments of friendship, and generous his in his sentiments. In short, he seemed to enjoy a universal aptitude to whatever is found amiable in the human heart.

To affections so conciliating, may be added, misfortunes not less distinguished and interesting. When James, the abdicated monarch of Great Britain and Ireland, fled from the resentment of his English subjects, and the ready agency of his successor and son-in-law, William Prince of Orange; the ancestor, of Leinster was among

among those, in the sister kingdom, who stood foremost to receive him. The territorial property of this loyalist, had been long alienated; and, though the history of his country allowed him the boast of royalty, the ingratitude of the third British Henry, and the misfortunes of succeeding revolutions, left him little more to support a numerous family and a train of dependants, who, agreeably to the ancient spirit of vassalage, in a manner, forced upon him their feudal servitude.

Upon the landing of James, O'Murrough—for that was the family name—immediately offered, not only, to risque his remaining patrimony, but the lives of his followers in a cause which he conceived to be that of oppressed royalty. James, accepted his attachment; and meeting in Ireland with many similar instances of affection, had, for some time, great reason to hope for success. The two famous battles of the River Boyne, and the plains of Aughrim, soon however changed the scene.—

In both, the armies of James were defeated with great slaughter ; and the flower of the original race of Hibernian nobility cut off.—O'Murrough, who fought with the utmost bravery, saw four of his sons fall in the two engagements ; and was himself desperately, though not mortally, wounded.

Under those unfortunate, and perilous circumstances, the old Royalist, with three remaining sons, fled for sanctuary to the house of an old and intimate connection, who had been wise enough, during the public commotions, to take the more fortunate part. O'Murrough, who had nothing to apprehend but the confiscation of his property, advised with his friend upon the most judicious means of securing to his offspring, their rightful inheritance. He had been for some time in the habit of selling small portions of his estates, and therefore a fictitious mortgage of the whole might the more readily escape suspicion. To this perfidious neighbour he therefore executed a conveyance in private trust,

trust; and, under the most solemn and sacred promises of restitution made him the nominal owner of his fortune.

The troubles of the kingdom gradually subsiding, O'Murrough had the good fortune to escape personal resentment; and, returning to his supposed friend, grateful acknowledgments, for his assistance and advice, demanded the repossession of his domains: but the execrable and traitorous monster, instead of performing the conditions of his engagement, absolutely denied the knowledge of any private agreement; ridiculed his application, and set at defiance his threats of equitable justice or personal revenge. The wife of the disappointed and wronged O'Murrough, who was still living, retained, by settlement upon herself and children, an estate of about eight hundred pounds per annum; and to that inconsiderable refuge, the whole family was obliged to resort for existence. The opinions of the best lawyers in the kingdom were had upon the occasion; but the deeds being *prima facie* in favour of the mortgage,

gage, a foreclosure was soon decreed, and a property which had remained for centuries in the family of O'Murrough, iniquitously confirmed to that of a stranger.

After the grief of this misfortune had, in some degree, subsided, O'Murrough took every public and private opportunity of insulting the villain who had plundered him; but he remained not less dead to honour, than to justice and humanity: and although he was detested, and execrated by the world in general, he yet had influence enough to obtain a seat in the privy council, by which his person became sacred, and revenge could not, for the present, reach him.

There was in the family of O'Murrough, an old and faithful servant, of the name of Cormac: he was a kind of hereditary annexation, being the descendant of forefathers, who had attached themselves, as domestic appendages, from the days of its highest consequence and splendour. He was not only a man of daring courage, but
of

of inviolable integrity. He observed, with grief, the melancholy effects of oppression.—The solicitude of his honoured master; and, the comparative distress of a rising generation, who were barred, by treachery, from the inheritance of their ancestors.—He saw also the growing importance, pride, and power of the wretch, whose baseness had produced those evils; and was seized by a sort of generous phrensy, to punish his perfidiousness.—Accordingly, without communicating his thoughts, or purposes, he pretended an excuse for a journey; and firmly bent upon revenge, travelled on foot to the capital, where the Parliament was then sitting, the Viceroy in the castle, and the town much crowded with the nobility and gentry from every part of the kingdom.

No time was lost in finding out the enemy, whose motions were for several days closely watched: until one fatal evening, (fatal, at least, to him) an express arrived, with an account of a dangerous

dangerous commotion having broke out in one of the southern counties, when a privy council was immediately convened, at which he, among others, attended.

Cormac saw him get into a sedan chair at his own house, and was restrained at that moment from rushing upon him, only by the crowd of servants who attended him to the door; and the hour, which was too early to favour a possibility of escape. He did not, however, lose scent of his quarry, and knowing that he would of course return, after the council broke up, placed himself in a convenient situation, at the corner of a remote street, and waited impatiently for the moment of accomplishing his designs.—The night was dark and stormy, and the elements appeared congenial and propitious to his purpose—It was striking the last hour, when the lights of two flambeaux discovered his approach--the footmen passed—the minister of wrath extended his avenging arm, and discharged a loaded pistol. The attendants and chairmen, who
heard,

heard, and were much alarmed at the explosion, were yet as ignorant of the effects, as they were of the cause; nor did they stop until the body of their master, in falling, broke the front glass of the suspended vehicle: they then halted, and, upon examination, found him breathless! The ball had entered the right side of the chair, and penetrating the head quite through, lodged in the opposite lining.

Nothing could exceed the consternation occasioned by this extraordinary event. Another council was immediately summoned; every search was made; and a reward, to a large amount, offered for the discovery of the assassin: but to no purpose. Cormac found little difficulty in concealment; he walked leisurely to the river, into which he threw the weapon of destruction, and from thence to his lodgings, where there could be no suspicions against him, as he never returned home until a late hour.

Various

Various were the reasons assigned for this extraordinary assassination; but, so various, and so many were the vices of the deceased victim, that it was impossible to fix with certainty upon any one. Rewards for the apprehension of the assassin, were doubled, by order of government; and several persons apprehended on suspicion; but nothing could be proved to affect either their lives or liberty.—Old Cormac, exulting in the issue of his enterprise, remained in the capital for some days, and formed the generous resolution, if, (according to the sanguinary spirit of the times,) any innocent person should have been condemned for the action, of standing forth and avowing himself the perpetrator — But the gallantry of his nature, not being put to that test, he returned home to participate the misfortunes of his beloved master.

Although the arm of Almighty justice was thus raised against a villain, prosperity was yet a stranger to the house of O'Murrough. The second of his surviving sons, being

being then but eighteen years of age, having received an affront from an officer in King William's service, drew his sword upon the instant—the assault was on each side fierce, but the officer being the stronger and more experienced, victory seemed to declare in his favour. Young O'Murrough had received two wounds; and being blinded by pride and anger, collected all his strength, and made a furious pass at his antagonist:—At that unhappy moment, his elder brother, unexpectedly arrived, and at the instant advancing too far, received his sword half way through his body. The fraternal emotions produced by this melancholy event, were such, as might naturally be expected—grief! rage! distraction! and revenge! were alternately displayed.—The officer, who was the original aggressor, being put off his guard by the accident, became the immediate sacrifice to the manes of the unfortunate O'Murrough, who was then breathing his last breath. The frantic fury of the survivor was not, however, yet satisfied; he made a desperate attempt

upon his own life, and would have closed the tragedy by an act of self-destruction, if he had not been prevented by the resolute interposition of some persons present, who forced him from the melancholy scene of action.

The deceased officer being a man of considerable distinction, and highly in the favour of government, warrants were immediately issued for the apprehension of his declared murderer, who was accordingly taken in a few hours, and conveyed to the public jail, where he was loaded with irons, and where a guard was set over him to prevent any act of despair which might defeat the determined prejudications of his enemies. An express was dispatched to the old man, who, already oppressed by misfortune, was scarcely able to support his drooping nature under the pressure of this exquisite calamity. However, being of a strong and resolute mind, he repaired immediately to the assistance

sistance of his distressed offspring; and attended by the faithful Cormac, arrived in the county town the next day.

Exhausted with grief, fatigue, and bodily weakness, he no sooner entered the prison and beheld his most favourite child, covered with wounds, and blood; and bound in fetters! than his limbs failed him, and a short suspension of life spared such feelings as might otherwise have ended in a final dissolution. Being, however, restored, and having given vent to the irresistible effects of sorrow, the old man comforted his child, and by every religious and philosophic argument, persuaded him to a reconciliation with a life which he had determined to put an end to.

Several friends now assembled, and proper means were concerted to avoid the probable consequences of a misfortune, which the malice of government had pronounced to be a crime of the most

flagitious nature. A special commission was ordered for the trial, and a prosecution as summary as it was vindictive, immediately took place. All the crown lawyers were retained, and such a jury impannelled as afforded but little hopes of impartial justice.

The awful day arrived, and the prisoner, attended by his aged parent, and a few other respectable personages, appeared in court, and pleaded not guilty. All that legal sophistry and misconstruction could devise, all that prejudice could suggest, or ingenuity could establish, was now exerted, and an act evidently the result of sudden passion, pronounced to be a deliberate murder. The eloquence of conscious innocence, the impressive effusions of parental sorrow, the tears which started in the eyes of every impartial auditor, were all of no effect; sentence of death was solemnly pronounced, and old O'Murrough again fainted.

If,

If, before the trial, little was to be expected from justice, after the fatal sentence nothing was to be hoped from mercy. Petitions were, however, presented to the Viceroy; and the Sheriff of the county, who was a man of ancient family, and much esteemed for benevolence of heart, applied in person for a respite, upon the grounds of new evidence, which he said he had collected subsequent to the trial; but all in vain, the petitions were treated with silent contempt, and the Sheriff ordered to do the indispensable duty of his office.

The fatal day, which was the sixth after conviction, arrived; thousands were collected from every part, and as the multitude chiefly consisted of the lower and unprejudiced orders of the people, nothing was to be heard in every quarter but lamentation and murmuring; and when the opening of the prison doors announced the approach of the unhappy convict, a general commotion, hootings, and execra-

tions, demonstrated a strong disposition to a rescue. A large party of the army being employed upon the occasion, the Sheriff saw what would be the consequences of violence ; and therefore exhorted the multitude to temperance. Had a man of less public esteem addressed them, his dissuasions would have been ineffectual ; but he spoke with the authority of virtue, and obtained an acquiescence, which even the terror of military opposition would not have succeeded in.

The prisoner, supported on one side by his aged father, and on the other by Cormac, the faithful sharer in all their calamities, now appeared—and now again the impetuosity of the multitude seemed ripe for laudable desperation ; but the Sheriff again persuaded them to obedience, and added, that he had yet some hopes of a respite. The place of execution was near a mile from the jail ; and, notwithstanding that distance, the prisoner was not allowed a carriage ; it was the barbarous

barous custom of the times, that convicts, however weak and emaciated, should walk to the last scene of dissolution. And here the Viscount Leinster took occasion to observe, that the youth and extraordinary beauty of his ancestor, made the deepest impression on the feeling heart of every spectator. The two wounds which he had received in the fatal conflict being entirely healed, and his mind heroically made up to the inevitable dispensations of heaven, he seemed to look beyond this world, and to anticipate the happiness of that to come. The father also appeared nobly resolute, and beheld his gallant offspring more with an eye of exultation than sorrow.

The procession passed slowly on, until it arrived at the Sheriff's house, situated about half way from the prison, when the owner, as if inspired by a supernatural greatness of soul, holding out his arm, commanded attention. — "I observe," said he, "that the unfortunate youth in my care looks weakened and fatigued; it is therefore

therefore my pleasure that he refresh himself in my house, and thereby be the better able to go through the trying and awful probation which the laws have consigned him to. I, alone, am responsible for the execution of those laws. I have a confidence in his honour; and I, alone, will take the charge of him!" Upon saying which, he took him gently by the arm, and led him into his mansion, not admitting even his father or Cormac to attend him.

Having introduced him into an apartment, and seated him by the fire, for the day was piercing cold, his first act of benevolence was to unbind his arms, which had been closely pinioned in the jail. "Under such restraint," said the generous Sheriff, "comfort cannot be imbibed." He then ordered some vivifying cordial, and bidding his astonished guest cherish the hopes of life, addressed him in the following manner:—"Brave and injured youth, whom the hand of oppression, to the disgrace of justice, would

would hurry from a world which you were evidently designed to adorn; this is the moment of your preservation. When I consented to accept the office I now hold, it was with a firm purpose of doing only what my conscience should dictate as right. I know your case too well not to know that, in obeying the inhuman mandate of your enemies, I should be as guilty of a deliberate murder, as you are, in the opinion of all impartial men, innocent. The worst your enemies or mine can do, is to affect my fortune; and fortune, when compared to the tranquillity of conscience, is but a contemptible concern. At the back door of my park is a good horse, with every other accommodation prepared for you; take therefore this purse, make the best of your way across the country, conceal yourself with care, until you have an opportunity of quitting the kingdom. Let me then hear from you, and may you be in future as happy as you and your house have been heretofore unfortunate."

Had

Had these words proceeded from the lips of an angel, they could not have been more melodious to the enraptured ears of a youth thus snatched from a premature and ignominious death ! With the certainty of preservation, all his ardent views of life returned ; and, he who, but a few short moments before, had lost sight of every thing but Heaven, now found himself as strongly attached to earthly objects as ever.

Gratitude, that most amiable of human qualities, was not sufficient for his feelings ; and language too inexpressive for his thoughts : but, the idea of the consequences to his great benefactor, soon cast a damp over all his joy, and sunk him again into unutterable sadness. “Alas,” said he, embracing his generous friend, “it must not be ; the sacrifice is too much. Let me therefore meet the last arrow of misfortune, and”—“Hold,” replied the noble-minded Sheriff, “this is no time to parley. I charge you follow me ; and,
be

be assured, that I would not forego this glorious opportunity of justice for any thing in the power of fortune !” So saying, he led the way, and was followed by O’Murrough, who scarcely perceived or felt his passage, until he arrived at the gate already mentioned.

An old man held the horse, which was completely accoutered; a small valise, containing a few indispensable necessaries, was fastened to the saddle; and under the old man’s arm, a bundle, containing a complete disguise. It need not be observed that all possible expedition was adopted; the fortunate malefactor soon changed his habiliments; and, in the dress of a common groom, took his departure.

By this time the multitude began to wonder at a delay so long and extraordinary; and some friends of the deceased officer, who attended the execution, expressed impatience and resentment. Old O’Murrough, and the weeping Cormac,
 now

now also became anxious, but from very different motives. They thought the awful moment was not avoidable; and, as such, wished the stings of it were over.

In some time, however, the virtuous and heroic agent of justice appeared; and, with a degree of composure and firmness, which delighted and surprised his numerous hearers, informed them, “that his prisoner was not yet able to pursue the remainder of the journey; neither did he think it eligible to disturb him further that day.” The shouts of exultation, which followed these words, rent the ætherial regions! The father, who upon being separated from his devoted child, had again fallen into a state of natural despondency, now began to cherish hopes of comfort; and the venerable Cormac, catching the sympathetic enthusiasm, appeared almost frantic with happiness.

The few individuals, already mentioned, thought it advisable to quit the assembly,

sembly; and the officer commanding the military party, as well as the civil power, knowing that the Sheriff had an indisputable right to proceed as he thought proper, at his own peril; only demanded in what manner they were to act.—They were answered, that the truth was, a respite had been privately obtained, and, that the execution was of course deferred until a future period.—Every one saw a mystery in the business, but nobody conceived the real cause; nor thought it possible that a ministerial servant of the Crown should be so much under the controul of humanity.—The fact was, however, soon made public; the Sheriff was taken into custody, and brought before the Privy Council; where he, not only avowed, but exulted, in the action; and, scorning to deprecate forgiveness, declared his ready submission to any judgment, which might legally be passed upon him.

Staggered at his intrepidity; and, somewhat fearful of his influence; the Council consigned him to the Attorney General,

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who

who prosecuting him in the Court of King's Bench, by attachment, was content with obtaining a fine of ten thousand pounds ; and, the money being immediately paid, he was of course discharged. His carriage was drawn by the populace several miles from the town ; and, at an equal distance from his mansion, he was met by thousands of people ; many of whom performed the same grateful office for the remainder of the journey.

Government would fain have involved old O'Murrough in what they called the guilt of this contempt ; but the Sheriff's delicate caution, in not admitting him into the house at the time of his son's escape, cleared him fully from any imputation of that kind. Labouring, however, under the strong contending emotions of joy, sorrow, hope, and despair, which, for some time, had agitated his declining nature, the old man did not long survive the event ; but lived, however, until he received letters from

from his son, who was then at Vienna, in a military station, and in high favour.

The settled estate, before-mentioned, now devolved to his youngest child, then no more than ten years of age; and he being left in the guardianship of two men of integrity and sound judgment, upon arriving at maturity, found his lands greatly improved. At a proper period, he gave his hand in marriage to a lady of ancient family and rank, and rich in the possessions of worth and beauty. By her he had two sons, and several daughters; the latter of whom all died in infancy. Of the sons, the elder went into the Spanish service, and was killed by a cannon-shot upon the lines before Gibraltar. "The younger son, to whom," said the Viscount Leinster, "I owe my existence, remained in Ireland until the death of his father; when, finding the religious and political interest of his country operate strongly against the activity of his disposition, he disposed of

his property, and went to his uncle, who was still living at Vienna.

“ My father,” continued the Viscount, “ who was greatly indebted to nature for personal favours, did not long remain at Vienna, before he attracted the notice of several females of distinction ; and, in some time, married into one of the first families of Lower Austria : but, the match being without consent, and greatly inadequate to the expectations of his wife’s parents, and powerful connections, they took every opportunity of manifesting their disapprobation ; until, at length, his pride being wounded, he formed the resolution of returning to his native country : for this purpose he made a second sale of his effects ; and, taking with him the beloved object of his disquietude, and two infant daughters, arrived in Ireland about five months before I was born——Unhappy birth !” said Leinster ; “ for my mother, by giving a son to his wishes, in a few hours withdrew herself from his connubial affections.

fections. Ireland, which he sought as a resting place and an asylum from German contumely, now became insupportable ; and, a liberal encouragement being held out in the Russian empire, he once more left the place of his nativity ; not, however, until he had made a proper arrangement in my favour.

“ With the friends among whom I was deposited, he held a regular correspondence for many years ; never failing to make such enquiries after me, and his other relatives, as were naturally expected. He informed us of a second marriage, and of great favours which he experienced from the late Emperor ; and intimated a design of sending for me, when I should have received an education in Ireland ; which, notwithstanding its improved state, Muscovy did not afford.—But, alas ! those pleasing communications did not long continue : upon the death of Peter, we were informed, that my father, who then held considerable posts of trust and power, was suddenly

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removed

removed from office ; and obliged, by flight, to avoid the dangerous rage of a new and powerful influence. From that period," continued he, " all correspondence ceased ; nor have we ever heard any intelligence whatsoever of him, his wife, or daughter, which we understood he had by his second marriage.

" The remainder of my history," said Leinster, " is short. My uncle, who was killed at Gibraltar, having by will left me a considerable fortune, I assigned the whole of my patrimonial inheritance to my two sisters, and set sail from the city of Cork to Cadiz : from thence I immediately repaired to the court of Madrid, where, laying my claims, and proving my consanguinity, I was put into full possession of my right ; and where, not retaining any desire of returning home, I put myself under the military tuition of a celebrated professor of tactics, and shortly obtained a commission in the service of his Catholic Majesty. Profound peace having succeeded

ceeded the unfortunate expedition under O'Reiley, I had no inducement to continue long in Spain; and having other motives besides those of service, for a journey to this country, I obtained leave of his Majesty, and took my route by the way of Segovia; where I beheld, with astonishment and admiration, the several celebrated manufactories, and the famous aqueduct built by the Emperor Trajan. From Segovia, I directed my journey to Burgos, the capital of Old Castile; but, at this day, distinguished only for the grandeur of its cathedral, containing no less than five coral churches, furnished with infinite splendor, and allowed to be the most magnificent in all Spain. From Burgos I proceeded to Logrono, and descending the Pyrenean mountains near Saint Jean, travelled through the province of Gascony, and arrived at Bourdeaux. In this city my astonishment and veneration were again excited by the wonderful remains of the once famous amphitheatre of Galienas.

Galienas. From the capital of Guienna, I bent my course to Perigueux; and there saw, with almost equal surprise, the beautiful temple of Venus, the amphitheatre, and other vestiges of antiquity. From Perigueux, I travelled to Limoges; and from Limoges, after a pleasing journey through the fertile plains of Barry, Montagis, and Sens; the latter, the famous Augendicum of the ancients. From Sens, in company with a young English nobleman, and his tutor, to Paris, where we were witnesses to the several acts of barbarity and injustice, which disgraced the onset of the revolution. Upon leaving Paris, my intentions were to visit the Netherlands; but the horrors of civil commotion, which I had beheld in France, induced me to alter my first purpose, and I proceeded to Verden; and through a woody and mountainous country to Treves, which, though once the most populous city of the Germanic empire, is now inferior to many. From Treves, I directed my journey

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ney to Franckfort. My admiration of the military talents of the late Frederic, induced me to visit the capital of Prussia, where a variety of useful and superb objects, but, above all, the prodigious arsenal, well rewarded the journey. From Berlin, I took the road to Colburg, celebrated for its salt-works. At Colburg, I found a vessel ready to sail for Revel, in which I took my passage for the Russian Empire; and, after a journey of four days, by the way of Tolsburg, Norway, and Nö-pore, I arrived in this city."

As Leinster progressively advanced in his narrative, the affection of Count Albert as progressively increased: but when he came to that part in which he mentioned the second marriage of his father; the favouritism of the Czar Peter, the revolution; the flight, which might easily have been a mistaken term for banishment; and the circumstance of one female child; he acknowledged the full power of sympathy. In the manly countenance of Leinster, he instantly

instantly saw the indubitable lineaments of Veda's soft and more beautiful features, and no longer doubted, but they were the children of the same father.

The communication of this discovery was of too much consequence to be delayed. Albert, not only disclosed it with confidence, but made the happy Leinster fully acquainted with the effects of his sister's charms; the critical situation in which she was placed; her aversion to Czerkaskoi; and his resolution of preventing a union so fatal to her tranquillity, and so ruinous to his own peace. Charmed and astonished at what he heard, Leinster embraced his friend, and vowed to assist, with his life and sword, against any force which might endeavour to counteract his, or Veda's, happiness.

While the two friends were thus employed in the mutual contemplation of extraordinary events, and declarations of reciprocal affection—a domestic announced the

the arrival of Colonel de Saint Foix. A character so volatile and lively, was but ill-suited to the disposition of mind in which the Count and Leinster then found themselves ; however, as de Saint Foix might probably bring some interesting information of Veda, or perhaps of the Czarina, he was admitted.

“ My dear Count !” said de Saint Foix, “ you should greet me as the messenger of good tidings !—I am sent express from the Empress, to desire your attendance. She is sufficiently recovered, to transact business ; and has received some accounts from the army, which she wishes to communicate. She commands you not to wait for ceremony ; and, by the bye, I hear intends to dispatch you immediately with a considerable reinforcement. Come, come, lose no time ; for hark ye, the Empress is as impetuous in war, as she is in other matters—You understand me !”—

Albert,

Albert, though alive to martial glory, heard this intelligence with a sensation very different from joy; and judged rightly, that the Czarina's sudden resolution proceeded from something more than military expedience. The truth was, that, being now well acquainted with his passion for Veda, as well as his avowed indifference, or rather dislike, of herself, she was determined to remove him from the object of his wishes; and by a well-acted deception, endeavoured to conceal her real sentiments, under the specious mask of necessity.

To decline, or excuse, himself from attending the royal summons, would have been impossible: de Saint Foix was therefore desir'd to announce his ready obedience; and, after a slight preparation, he immediately repaired to the palace. Catherine was seated in all her accustomed magnificence, and attended by the Great Duke, the Ministers of the war and naval departments, Prince Czerkaskoi, and other lords.

lords. Her reception of Albert was evidently embarrassed; and while her tongue was lavish as to what she expected from his valour, her voice faltered with displeasure at his insensibility.

Albert, on the contrary, acquitted himself with a becoming grace; ~~assured~~ assured her Majesty of his readiness to depart for action, and expressed an impatient desire to prove, at the expence of her enemies, both the ardour and sincerity of his zeal. This was, however, nothing more nor less than the hypocrisy of love: the secret emotions of his heart were at that moment of a very opposite nature, and he was determined, by some well contrived device, to delay his departure until he had at least seen Veda, and interchanged with her, vows of everlasting love.

The spirit shewn upon this occasion, was by no means displeasing to the Empress; and Prince Czerskaskoi, who listened with attention, evinced as much satisfaction as

the moroseness of his nature would admit of. Every thing was to be prepared accordingly, and the reinforcement under the command of Count Albert ordered to hold themselves in readiness at a moment's warning.

Before the interview was over, the Great Duke paid some polite compliments to the Count; but the Empress, notwithstanding all her assumed complaisance, could not avoid giving vent to the secret solicitude which worked upon her feelings. She observed, with an affected smile, that as Count Albert had left his country *to serve her in the field*, there could be no possible doubt but his avidity would deserve her friendship.

Upon the delivery of this sentiment, so emphatically pronounced, Count Albert immediately recollected the late nocturnal conversation between him and de Saint Foix, and at once suspected that he had been betrayed. Catherine, observed his embarrassment, and secretly enjoyed the disquietude

quietude of his feelings. Not content, however, she proceeded to inflict still deeper wounds.

She observed, that before his departure she meant to present him with a specimen of Russian gallantry, in the espousal of Prince Czerkaskoi, and her adopted daughter; so she condescended to call the charming Veda. The ceremony, she said, was to be performed in a few days, at her favourite palace the Hermitage, and to be attended with such forms and splendour as the rank, and her esteem of the parties, demanded. At the mention of this event—an event so fatal to the peace of Albert—all his assumed fortitude forsook him, and he shewed the most manifest signs of discomposure.

In a short time, however, he recovered himself so far, as to thank the Empress for her intended honour; adding, that as the happiness of her people was the first object of her auspicious reign, he made no doubt but, on the present occasion, she

had strictly adhered to that gracious principle, and consulted the wishes and affections of the parties! Upon saying which, he immediately retired, followed by the frowns of Czerskaskoi, and the notice of all present.

Those only who know the power of that resistless beauty, which at first sight enslaves the heart, can be sensible of Albert's feelings upon the recital of this detested marriage; neither were those of the Viscount Leinster much less affected: the one claiming under the sacred influence of mutual tenderness; and the other, as the only natural protector of an orphan sister, for whom he already felt all the affections of consanguinity.

When the effects of passion had in some degree subsided, the two friends devised a variety of expedients, but none that appeared, upon the most deliberate reflection, probable; or free from extreme danger. Albert at length thought of advising with de Saint Foix; but that idea was again opposed by

by the suspicion of his having betrayed to Catherine the conversation already alluded to.

In this exquisite dilemma, de Saint Foix, who had heard the Empress's conversation, and was himself as much surprised and confused as Albert, entered the room, and without waiting either for explanation, or reproaches, in the most serious manner he was capable of, declared his perfect ignorance of the means by which she became acquainted with their discourse. The truth was, Madam de Saint Foix, who trusted her husband with but little of her private communication, had never let him into the secret.

There was so much express sincerity in de Saint Foix's justification, that Albert gave him liberal credit for its truth; and now, being at liberty to demand his friendship, acknowledged to him the situation of his heart: beseeching him, in the most earnest manner, to assist in effecting an interview with Veda. De Saint Foix, who never knew either the delights or anxieties

of a violent attachment, endeavoured at first to ridicule the passion; but, at length, finding Count Albert grave and determined, he consented to interest himself in his favour; and, through the medium of his wife, to indulge his inclinations.

Madam de Saint Foix was not only a woman of great sensibility, but of great caution also. She well knew that, should the Empress discover her acquiescence, her ruin would inevitably follow; and could not be persuaded by her husband to consent to what she had so much reason to dread the consequences of.

The Colonel therefore, with a greater view to probability, seriously advised Count Albert, if possible, to make good his own interest with her. For that purpose, he advised a meeting, and concerted measures, so that his wife and Albert should conclude the business together. The enamoured Count accepted his proposal with unbounded gratitude; and, in the disguise
of

of a livery lacquay, repaired that evening, to Madam de Saint Foix's apartments, as if to deliver a letter.

Faithful to his engagement, the Colonel met him at the entrance; and, under pretence of detaining him for a written answer, conducted him to an apartment, where, in a short time, he was joined by Madam de Saint Foix.

This lady, it has been already observed, had conceived a particular esteem for Count Albert; but, congenial to the nature of her husband, she also was by no means capable of any fixed passion. Albert's accomplishments had certainly made some delicate impressions in her mind; but she found him so entirely occupied by another, that she lost sight of any interest in his heart: she therefore listened to his solicitations with the greater degree of patience and concurrence; and, at length, suffered him to persuade her into a measure which she much dreaded. Al-
bert,

bert, in the transports of his love, sealed her consent with a kiss of gratitude, and presented her with a brilliant ring of very considerable value.

Madam de Saint Foix observed, that immediately after the accident of the review—every circumstance of which the Empress was well informed of—Veda had been removed to a favourite summer residence of the Empress's, called *Mon Plaisir*, situated upon the edge of the sea, at a small distance from the palace of Peterhoff, surrounded by a thick wood, cut into walks and alleys; and intermixed with *jet d'eaux*, and fountains. No place could be more favourable to the secret meeting of lovers, than this charming retirement; but, the distance—above twenty miles from the capital—and Albert's constant attendance at court; and his military duty, being both indispensable, the absence necessary for an expedition there, and suspicions which might naturally arise, appeared

appeared at first to be insurmountable difficulties.

Love, however, which often surmounts apparent impossibilities, and the devices of an ingenious woman, which perform almost equal wonders, soon overcame every obstacle. It was determined that Count Albert should feign a severe indisposition; that one of the royal physicians, who was entirely devoted to Madam de Saint Foix, should visit him, and report his case to the Czarina; and, that in three or four days, when he should be supposed freed from imminent danger, but still unable to go abroad with safety, he should disguise himself in the dress of a peasant, and, accompanied by a faithful domestic, travel on foot to the elysium of his wishes. The Viscount Leinster would have been selected for the companion of this journey, but his absence at a time when the Count's state of health should be supposed to demand the care and company of so dear a friend—for their friendship was now well known—

known—might have an extraordinary appearance.

Every thing being thus settled, Madam de Saint Foix took an early opportunity, by one of the Czarina's messengers, of acquainting Veda with the expedient. She knew that Veda's heart was warmed by an equal passion ; and that the information would inspire her with equal happiness. The hour, the place, the signal, and the disguise, were described with accurate circumsppection ; and every cautionary advice that good sense and thorough knowledge could dictate, was liberally bestowed.

The happy Albert now returned to his friend ; who, though happy also in approving the concerted scheme, was yet concerned that propriety did not allow him to be of a party, in every respect so interesting. It required, however, but little reflection to be perfectly satisfied ; and Albert, promising, of course to communicate his history to Veda, the next morning

morning was resolved upon for the commencement of the business.

To all enquirers, Count Albert was announced to be attacked by a feverish indisposition. The faculty were sent for; and the supposed patient acted his part so admirably, that notwithstanding their professional skill, they actually thought his complaints were real. The Empress no sooner heard of his illness, than, as was expected by Madam de Saint Foix, she betrayed the most tender concern, and ordered her first physician to attend him.

The Doctor, whom we have already mentioned to be highly in the interest of Madam de Saint Foix, reported, as he was previously instructed; and, at a proper period, pronounced his patient to be in a state of security and amendment. Thus the long-wished for hour arrived: the season was mildly auspicious—the lingering fun was now sunk beneath the salt wave; and pale Cynthia, seated in her pearly bark,
slowly

slowly gliding across the blue expanse of Heaven, when Albert and his attendant departed from the city, and bent their course towards the palace of Peterhoff.

Having arrived at their journey's end long before day, the travellers took their lodgings in a hut—the only public accommodation which the road afforded—there they rested on straw-beds for a short time; and, having refreshed themselves with provisions, carried by the attendant, they quitted their miserable caravansera, and entered the wood which surrounded the palace.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.